

Sātārā plates of Viṣṇuvardhana I

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Palaeographic description

Halantas. Final N (l8) resembles a regular na with a detached horizontal line in place of a headmark; final T (l14) resembles a regular ta with an attached horizontal line in place of a headmark. Final M (l17) is a slightly reduced ma with the left arm bent to the right to form a horizontal line. Original punctuation consists of single and occasionally double plain vertical bars. Other palaeographic observations. Anusvāra is normally above the centre or right-hand side of the character to which it belongs. Long ī is unusual, with a vertical line crossing the circular mark. La occurs both in a northern form with a regular-sized vertical stem and a headmark, and a southern form with a long backward-curling tail. The opening symbol resembles the numeral 1, but as Fleet observes, it is not a pagination mark, since there are no corresponding marks elsewhere. It resembles an Arabic figure 3 rotated 90 degrees counterclockwise.

Edition

Seal

<1> śrī-biṭṭarasa

Plates

<Page 1r>

<Page 1v> <1> ~ svasti<.> svāmi-mahāsena-pādānuddhyātānām mānavya-sagotrāṇām
h(ā)<2>rīti-putrāṇām māt<ri!<ṛ>-gaṇa-prasāda-parirakṣita-bhujārggalānām
kṣīroda<3>dhi-śayana-suptotthita-prasāda-parilabdha-varāha-lāñchanānām
<cali!<kyā<4>nām varṣe sambhūtaḥ śakti-traya-saṃpannaḥ

1. Āryā

jayati raṇavikrama-n<ri!<ṛ>po ni<5>○rasta-ripu-n<ri!<ṛ>pati-śaurya-mada-rāgaḥ
kalyuga-khala-nirmathanai<ḥ> sa<6>tyāśraya-bhāvitaś caritaiḥ

2. Anuṣṭubh

abhavat tasya sa<t>-kīrtti<ḥ>
kīrttivarmā sthira-sthi<7>ti<ḥ>|
suta<ḥ> sucaritādhāra<ḥ>
kṛta-kṛtyaḥ pati<ḥ> kṣiteḥ

3. Anuṣṭubh

tasya putro mahāte<8>jā<ḥ>|
kandarpa Iva mūrttimāN
dharmma-jñāś ca kṛta-jñāś ca|
pārththa-tulya-parākkrama[h.]

4. Anuṣṭubh

<Page 2r> <9> Abhimānam ivoddhartum
narāṇām śastra-jīvinām|
vidhātrā vihito loke
<10> sa ca bibhatsur eva ca|

tena<-m al<A>neka-sāmanta-praṇata-makuṭa-cūḍāmaṇi-<11>nigh<ri!<ṛ>ṣṭa-
caraṇāravindena sakala-mahī-maṇḍala-tilaka-bhūtena śrī-p<ri!<ṛ>thi<12>vī-
vallabha-viṣṇuvarddhana-yuvarāja-viṣamasiddhinā kurumarathyāvasthite<13>○na

mātā-pitror ātmanaś ca puṇyāvāptaye kārttika-paurṇamāsyām veda<14>-
v(edā)ṅga-pāragā<n?<n>ām gh<ri!<r>takauśika-sagotrāṇām viśvāmitrava<T
<lakṣmaṇa<15>svāmi-putrāṇām Acalasvāmi-vedasvāmi-devasvām<i-Ā?<inām
ā>dityasvāmi-nāgakumā<16>ra-sahitānāṁ putra-pautrādīnā<m!m avyā{t}saṁgenācandrārka-
kṣiti-sthiti-samakāl<ā!<āT><17> bali-caru-vaiśvadevāgnihotra-havana-pañca-
mahāyajñotsarpaṇārtthaM<Page 2v> <18> śrīnilaya-bhoge Aṇopalyāgrāhāsy-
ottarataḥ bhīmarathī-dakṣiṇa-ta<19>ṭe Alandatīrtthaṁ nāma grāmo vidhivad udaka-
pūrvvam datta<h>

viditam astu sa<20>rvveṣāṁ paryyanta-viṣayapati-sāmanta-grāmabhogika-
mahattarādīnāṁ {A}cā<21>ṭa-bhaṭa-kusidādīnā<m!m apraveśyaḥ sarvvādāna-
viśuddh<el!<a I>ty avagamyā cala<22>○-pavana-preritodadhi-jala-taraṅga-cañcalaṁ
jīva-lokam anupreksya<23> tasmāl lopo na kāryyaḥ<.> yo vājñāna-timira-
paṭalāv<ril!<r>ta-mati<d?<r> ā<ñ?<c>chimdyā<24>d ācchidyamānaṁ yo vānu-
mode<ta> sa pañcabhir mahā-pāṭakai<h> samyukto bha<25>viṣyatīty<.> uktañ
ca bhagavatā veda-vyāseṇa vyāseṇa||

5. Anuṣṭubh

śaṣṭīm varṣa-saha<26>srāṇi|
svargge tiṣṭhati bhūmi-daḥ
Ācchettā cānumantā ca|
tāny eva narake va<Page 3r><27>se<T>

6. Anuṣṭubh

bahubhir vvasudhā bhuktā
rājabhis sagarādibhi<h>
yasya yasya yadā<28>bhūm<i!<is>
<ist!<st>asya tasya tadā phalaM

7. Anuṣṭubh

tād<ri!<r>k puṇyaṁ na dadatām
jāyate no dharābhujām
<29> bhuvam anya-pratiṣṭhān tu
yād<ri!<r>g bhavati rakṣatām|

8. Anuṣṭubh

pūrvva-dattām dvijātibhyo|
yatnād rakṣa<30>yudhiṣṭhira{h}

mahīm mahṛi!matām śreṣṭha|
dānṛā ś!<āc ch>reyo <'>nupālanaM

9. Anuṣṭubh

bra<31>○hma-sve mā matīm kuryyṛā!<āT>|
prānaiḥ kaṇṭha-gatair api|
agni-dagdhāni roha<32>nti|
brahma-dagdham na rohati||

10. Anuṣṭubh

sva-dattām para-dattām vā|
yo hareta vasundharāM
<33> ṣaṣṭīm varṣa-saharāṇi|
kumbhīpākeṣu pacyate||

11. Anuṣṭubh

virṁddhyāṭavīṣv atoyāsu
<34> śuṣka-koṭara-vāsinah|
kṛṣṇāhaya <'>bhijāyante|
bhūmidānāpahāri<35>ṇah

śrī-mahārājasya pravarddhamānaka-saṁvatsare Aṣṭame śāsanam likhitam iti

<Page 3v>

Apparatus

Part B

<1> ~ svasti ◇ *svasti* BGS; *om svasti* JFF.

<6> sa<t>-kīrtti<ḥ> ◇ *sa-kīrtti* BGS; *sa-kīrtti<ḥ>* JFF • Fleet's translation also shows that he accepts the received reading, but since it is grossly unmetrical, I think it must be a scribal error.

<10> tenaṛ-m a!<A>neka- ◇ *tena Aneka*- BGS; *teṛnama?<nā>neka*- JFF • Fleet also proposes an alternative emendation to *tenaivam aneka*. I prefer to assume that the *m* is used here in non-standard sandhi and normalise to hiatus.

<14> viśvāmitravaṛT! ◇ *viśvāmitrava(dhṛta)* BGS; *viśvāmitravaṛT!<I>* JFF • I am not sure what Shastree wished to express with his parentheses, but I believe that he reads *T* as *ta* and proposes emending *va* to *dhṛ*.

<15> -devasvām;*i-Ā?*<inām ā>dityasvāmi- JFF ◇ -*devasvāmi-Ādityasvāmi-* BGS • Hiatus would not be surprising in the inscription, but I believe (and think Fleet reasoned along the same lines) that *sahita* further on means that we have three sons plus two others here. The omission of the genitive ending here may be poor grammar on the composer’s part, but it may also be eyeskip omission by the scribe.

<16> -samakāl;*ā!*<āT> JFF ◇ -*samakāl;*ā?*<am>* BGS • Since *ā* for *am* seems an unlikely scribal error, we are probably dealing with the non-standard ablative ending -*ā* here.

<17> mahāyajñotsarpaṇārtham JFF ◇ *mahāyajña-Arpaṇārtham* BGS.

<18> -bhoge JFF ◇ -*bhogo* BGS.

<19> Aṇopalyā° JFF ◇ *Aṇopalvā°* BGS.

<20> {A}cā<21>ṭa- JFF ◇ *Ācāṭa-* BGS • The scribe or the composer must have been familiar with the standard formulation beginning with *a-cāṭa*, but since he then wrote *apraveśyaḥ*, the privative must be suppressed here.

<21> -viśuddh;*!*<a l>ty JFF ◇ -*vi;*bh?*<ś>uddhety* BGS.

<22> anuprekṣya JFF ◇ *anupre{k}ṣya* BGS.

<23> -mat;*i;d?*<r> ā;*ñ?*<c>chirṇdyā<24>d ācchidyamānaṁ ◇ -*mat;*i;d?*<r> āc-chirṇdyā<24>d ācchidyamānaṁ* JFF; -*mat;*i;r?*<d> ācchirṇdyā<24>*i;d?*<r> ācchidyamānaṁ* BGS • BGS’s emendations are in all probability a typographic error (and perhaps incorrect “correction” of that error by the printer) and his actual reading and emendation was probably the same as that of Fleet.

<24> vānumode<ta> JFF ◇ *vānumodet* BGS • I suspect that this is a non-standard ending rather than a scribal mistake. Compare *vase* in ll. 26-27.

<25> ṣaṣṭirṇ JFF ◇ *ṣaṣṭir* BGS.

<26> va<Page 3r><27>se<T> JFF ◇ *vaset* BGS • I suspect that this is a non-standard ending rather than a scribal mistake. Compare *vānumode* in l. 25.

<28> dadatām JFF ◇ *dātaram* BGS.

<29> -pratiṣṭhān tu JFF ◇ -*pratiṣṭhā;*t?*<p>ya* BGS.

<30> dān;*ā!*<āc ch>reyo JFF ◇ *dānāt śreyo* BGS • Another non-standard ablative ending, compare *samakālā* in l. 16.

<31> kuryy;*ā!*<āT> ◇ *dān;*ā!*<āc ch>reyo* JFF; *kuryyāT* BGS • Fleet’s emendation cannot be excluded, but compare the non-standard third-person optatives in lines 25 and 26.

Translation

Plates

⟨1-4⟩ Greetings! In the lineage of the Calikyas—who were deliberately appointed (to kingship) by Lord Mahāsenā, who are of the Mānavya *gotra*, who are the sons of Hārītī, the shafts of whose arms are guarded by the grace of the band of Mothers, who have acquired the Boar emblem through the grace of (Viṣṇu) who rises from sleep reclining on the Milk Ocean—arose, endowed with the three powers (*śakti-traya*)—

1.

Victorious is he, King (*nṛpa*) Raṇavikrama, who cast down the prowess, pride and passion of enemy kings ⟨and who was⟩ known as Satyāśraya {recognised as one who has truthfulness as his foundation} through his actions that smash the evils of the Kali age.

2.

He had a son, Kīrtivarman of true fame (*kīrti*), steadfast in ⟨maintaining⟩ stability, with good deeds as his foundation, a lord of the earth who fulfilled his duties.

3.

His son of great splendour is like Kandarpa (*Kāma*) embodied, familiar with moral duty (*dharma*) and mindful of what has been done ⟨for him⟩, comparable to Pṛthā's son (Arjuna) in bravery.

4.

It is as though he—and, indeed, Bībhatsu (Arjuna)—had been placed in the world by the Creator in order to tear up the arrogance of men who make a living by their weapons.

⟨10-19⟩ He, the Favourite of Fortune and the Earth (*śrī-pṛthivī-vallabha*) Crown Prince (*yuvarāja*) Viṣṇuvardhana Viśamasiddhi, whose lotus feet are rubbed by the crest jewels on the bowed diadems of numerous subordinates (*sāmanta*) and who is an ornament of the entire circle of the earth, has—on the full-moon day of Kārttika, while stationed at Kurumarathya,¹ in order to acquire merit for his mother and father as well as for himself—granted, with ⟨due⟩ ceremony accompanied by ⟨a libation of⟩ water, the village named Alandatīrtha, (located) in the Śrīnilaya territory (*bhoga*) to the north of the Aṇopalya Brahmanical holding (*agrāhāra*) and on the southern bank of the (river) Bhīmarathī to ⟨Brahmins⟩ familiar with the Vedas and Vedāṅgas: Acalasvāmin, Vedasvāmin and Devasvāmin—who are the sons of Lakṣmaṇasvāmin

¹Or on the road to Kuruma?

and are of the Ghr̥ta-Kauśika *gotra* ;with Viśvāmitra <as their *pravara*>?²—together with Ādityasvāmin and Nāgakumāra,³ to be the inalienable property of their sons, grandsons and so on as long as the moon, sun and earth remain, for the offering of the five great sacrifices, <viz.> Bali, Caru, Vaiśvadeva, Agnihotra and Havana.

<19–25> Let <this> be known to all governors of the marches (*paryanta-viṣayapati*), subordinate rulers (*sāmanta*), landlords (*grāmabhogika*), headmen (*mahattara*) and others: understanding <this village> to be barred from constables (*cāṭa*), men-at-arms (*bhaṭa*), ;collectors? (*kusīda*) and the like and to be exempt (*viśuddha*) from all revenue-taking (*ādāna*), and bearing in mind that the world of the living is as volatile as the waves on the water of an ocean whipped by a fickle wind, therefore no transgression <of this property> should be made. But, if someone with a mind obscured by the shroud of the darkness of (spiritual) ignorance should seize it or condone its being seized, the five great sins shall be visited upon him. So too did the reverend Vyāsa, the redactor (*vyāsa*) of the Vedas speak:

5.

A donor of land stays in heaven for sixty millennia, <while> a seizer <of granted land> and a condoner <of such seizure> shall reside in hell for just as many.

6.

Many kings, beginning with Sagara, have enjoyed the bountiful land. Whosoever at any time owns the land, the fruit {reward (accrued of granting it)} belongs to him at that time.

7.

No such merit is generated for us kings when we give land, as that which occurs when we protect the foundation of another.

8.

O Yudhiṣṭhira, diligently preserve land that has been previously donated to the twice-born. O best of land-possessors, preserving <a grant> is superior to making a grant.

9.

²I follow Fleet in interpreting the text to mean that Viśvāmitra was the (principal) *pravara* of the donees, or at least of the first three. On the basis of syntax, the text should mean “who, like Viśvāmitra, were the sons of Lakṣmaṇasvāmin,” which does not make sense. The intent may also have been say that Lakṣmaṇasvāmin was like Viśvāmitra, but I am again not sure that this controversial character is a desirable comparison.

³The structure of the text implies that the parentage and *gotra* given above applies only to the first three donees, but it may have been meant to apply to the last two as well.

One must not, even at death's door, set his mind on the property of a Brahmin! What fire has burnt, grows <again, but> what the *brahman* has burnt will not grow.

10.

He who would seize land, whether given by himself or by another, shall be cooked in the Pot-Stewing (*kumbhipāka*) Hells for sixty thousand years.

11.

The seizers of a land grant will be born as black adders dwelling in dry holes in the waterless wilderness of the Vindhya.

<36> The above decree (*śāsana*) was written in the eighth ongoing year of His Majesty the King (*mahārāja*).

Translation into French by Estienne-Monod 2008

Plates

<1-4> Om ! Prospérité ! A celui qui a acquis les trois pouvoirs,⁴ né dans la lignée des Calukya, qui méditent aux pieds du seigneur Mahāsena, du même gotra que les descendants de Manu, fils de Hārītī, dont les bras sont des barres de portes, protégés par la faveur de la troupe des Mères, qui ont gagné de porter la marque du sanglier par la faveur <du dieu> qui dort, allongé sur l'océan de lait,

1.

Victoire au roi Raṇavikrama, dont la vaillance, l'enthousiasme et la fougue anéantissent les rois ennemis, lui qui devint Satyāśraya en accomplissant le barattement des méchants du Kaliyuga !

2.

Son fils, pourvu de gloire, fut Kīrtivarman, riche d'une ferme constance, réceptacle de nobles actions, qui accomplit son devoir, souverain de la terre.

3.

Le fils de celui-ci, pourvu d'un grand *tejas*, tel Kandarpa sous sa forme corporelle, lui qui connaissait autant le dharma que les bienfaits, avait un courage comparable à celui de Pārtha.

⁴Les trois pouvoirs constitutifs de la royauté : *utsāha*, l'audace, *prabhu*, la puissance, *mantra*, les conseils, cf. *Arthaśāstra*, 6, 2, 33.

4.

Comme pour éradiquer l'orgueil des hommes qui vivent des armes, lui, Bibhatsu, fut placé dans le monde par le créateur.

〈10-19〉 Celui-ci, dont les pieds de lotus sont frottés par les maîtres joyaux des diadèmes des nombreux feudataires inclinés, devenu l'ornement du cercle entier de la terre, le prince héritier illustre Prthivī Vallabha Viṣṇuvardhana, 〈alias〉 Viṣamasiddhi, résidant à Kurumarathī, afin d'acquérir des mérites pour sa mère, son père et lui-même, lors de la pleine lune du mois de Kārtika, donne à Acalasvami, Vedasvāmi et Devasvāmi, ainsi qu'à Ādityasvāmi et Nāgakumāra, qui sont les fils de Lakṣmaṇasvāmi, - appartenant aux Viśvāmitra, qui connaissent l'ensemble des Veda et Vedāṅga, du *gotra* de Ghṛtakauśika, - et à leurs fils et petit-fils, aussi longtemps que dureront la lune, le soleil, la terre, afin d'accomplir les cinq grands sacrifices que sont le bali, le caru, le vaiśvadeva, l'agnihotra⁵ et le havana,⁶ dans le *bhoga* de Śrīnilaya, au nord de l'*agrahāra* d'Aṇopalya, sur la rive sud de la Bhīmarathī, le village nommé Alandatīrttha, après avoir fait une libation d'eau qui convient.

〈19-25〉 Que ceci soit connu de tous les chefs de *viṣaya* voisins, les feudataires, les chefs de villages, les chefs de familles,⁷ etc. ; l'entrée 〈de ce village〉 est interdite aux troupes régulières et irrégulières ainsi qu'aux usuriers, etc., 〈ayant déclaré〉 qu'il était libre de tout impôt, ayant compris que le monde vivant est instable comme les vagues de l'océan, agité par un vent instable,⁸ et veillant à ce qu'aucune transgression ne soit effectuée. Le bienheureux Vyāsa, compilateur des Veda, a dit : Que celui qui, l'esprit obscurci par le voile ténébreux de l'ignorance, transgresse (cet édit), ou approuve qu'il soit transgressé, soit lié aux cinq grands crimes !

5.

Le donateur de la terre séjourne soixante mille ans dans le ciel, que celui qui interrompt (la donation) et celui qui l'approuve demeurent aussi longtemps en enfer !

6.

Beaucoup de rois ont joui de la terre, à commencer par Sagara, celui qui possède la terre en possède le fruit.

7.

⁵ Sur ces sacrifices, cf. insc. n°2. Le *bali*, le *caru* et le *vaiśvadeva* sont aussi mentionnés in insc. nos 2 et 7. Sur l'*agnihotra* cf. insc. n° 7.

⁶ Sur ce sacrifice, cf. ŚBr. KātyŚr., références données in Monier-Williams.

⁷ D. C. Sircar, 1966, p. 191 : chef de village, famille, communauté.

⁸ Même idée in insc. n°7.

Ceux qui donnent et ceux qui jouissent de la terre ne gagnent pas le même mérite que ceux qui protègent une terre établie par autrui.

8.

Donnée auparavant aux brahmanes, ô Yudhiṣṭhira, protège avec force cette terre ! la préservation, ô meilleur des princes de la terre, est plus grande que le don.

9.

Ne porte pas de convoitise au bien d'un brahmane, même si les souffles ont quitté ta gorge, ce que le feu a brûlé croît, ce qu'un brahmane a brûlé ne croît plus.

10.

Qu'elle soit donnée par lui ou par un autre, celui qui prend une terre, cuit en enfer pendant soixante mille ans.

11.

Habitant des grottes arides dans les forêts sauvages du Vindhya, ceux qui s'emparent d'une donation de terre renaissent comme serpents noirs.

⟨35⟩ Cet édit a été gravé pendant la huitième auguste année ⟨de règne⟩ de l'illustre grand roi.

Bibliography

First edited in rudimentary form by Ball Gangadhar Shastree (Shastree 1844, N° 1), with a lithograph. Properly edited with new estampage by J. F. Fleet 1890. The present edition by Dániel Balogh is based on a collation of these editions with Fleet's estampages. Shastree silently normalises spelling and punctuation, which is not shown in the apparatus here. Metadata associated with this edition have been published separately in Balogh 2026, available on Zenodo.

Primary

[BGS] Shastree, Ball Gangadhar. 1844. "Two Ancient Inscriptions in the Cave character and Sanskrit language, engraved on Copper-plates, translated into English." JBBRAS 2 (8), pp. 1–12. Item 1.

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Secondary

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